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Wednesday, December 28, 2016 metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

CARRIE FISHER DIES AT 60

Child of Hollywood blazed a path as "Star Wars" heroine. 2

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Mayor Kenney creates a cabinet to grapple with garbage. 2

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3 things you need to know

CARRIE FISHER, "STAR WARS'" PRINCESS LEIA, DIES AT 60

Carrie Fisher, who rose to fame as Princess Leia in the "Star Wars" films and later endured drug addiction and stormy romances with show business heavyweights, died on Tuesday aged 60, her daughter said through a family spokesman. "It is with a very deep sadness that Billie Lourd confirms that her beloved mother Carrie Fisher passed away at 8:55 this morning," Lourd said in a statement issued by Simon Halls. "She was loved by the world, and she will be missed profoundly." Fisher's friend and "Star Wars" co-star Mark Hamill said in a tweet: "No words. #Devastated" William Shatner, best known for his role in the television series "Star Trek," said he would miss her. "A wonderful talent & light has been extinguished." Fisher, the daughter of actress Debbie Reynolds and singer Eddie Fisher, who died in 2010, had been in England shooting the third season of the British sitcom "Catastrophe." She suffered a heart attack during a flight on Friday from London to Los Angeles. She was met by paramedics and rushed to the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. Her death came a month after the actress and author made headlines by disclosing that she had a three-month love affair with her "Star Wars" co-star Harrison Ford 40 years ago. Fisher revealed the secret to People magazine while promoting her new memoir, "The Princess Diarist," just before it went on sale. The book is based on Fisher's diaries from her time working on the first "Star Wars" movie. REUTERS

Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher as Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia GETTY IMAGES

TRUMP PICKS HIS COMPANY LAWYER FOR SPECIAL NEGOTIATOR

2 Republican President-elect Donald Trump has turned to his company's long-time top lawyer to serve as a special negotiator for trade deals and other talks, Trump's team said in a statement on Tuesday. Jason Greenblatt, chief legal officer for The Trump Organization who served as Trump's adviser to the Middle East, will work as Trump's special representative for international negotiations, the statement said.

REUTERS

AMAZON SAYS 2016 HOLIDAY SEASON 'BEST-EVER'

3 Amazon.com said it had its best-ever holiday season, shipping more than one billion items worldwide through its Prime membership program. The company said more than 72 percent of its customers worldwide shopped through mobile devices, adding that Dec. 19 was the busiest shopping day this holiday season. The Amazon Echo home assistant and its smaller version, Echo Dot, were best-sellers, said Jeff Wilke, chief executive of Amazon's Worldwide Consumer division. "Despite our best efforts and ramped-up production, we still had trouble keeping them in stock," he said. Other best sellers included 72-pack Keurig K-Cups, the movie "Finding Dory," Samsung's Gear VR virtual reality headset and Nintendo's "Pokemon Sun" and "Pokemon Moon" role-playing video games, the company said. REUTERS

Raymond Gant, founder of volunteer cleanup organization the Ray of Hope Project, works with a group of volunteers. COURTESY OF RAY OF HOPE PROJECT

Mayor assembles cabinet to clean up Philadelphia

Can anyone really clean the infamously dirty streets of "Filthadelphia"?

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It's a sad fact of life for Philadelphians. On some blocks, litter, garbage and such eyesores as discarded mattresses or laundry dryers pollute the streets, sometimes for days.

In six months, however, the city can expect to see a new "action plan" for grappling with litter and waste from the Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet, which Mayor Jim Kenney created by executive order last week.

Nic Esposito, the cabinet's director, is someone who has dealt with the garbage like everyone else.

"I just cleaned up a lot next to my house, because I couldn't stand to look at it anymore," he said. I filled up five contractor bags. … I was just trying to get it cleaned up because I didn't want it blowing everywhere."

Now he'll be working with the Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet to find new ways to fight litter and garbage citywide. But their focus is even grander than that.

It includes the goal of Philly becoming a "Zero Waste" city by 2035, by reducing "the amount of material in the waste stream … with a long-term goal of diverting almost all waste from conventional landfills and incinerators."

Similar goals have previously been set in cities like New York and Los Angeles. Getting there will be a gradual process, but Esposito noted that market forces are already coming to bear on how businesses package their products, with more tending toward using recycled or biodegradable materials.

"We can't keep burying trash and throwing things away at the rate we're doing as humans. It's destroying the planet," Esposito said.

Litter Cabinet's objectives

- Zero waste plan
- Litter index
- Manage litter, illegal dumping
- Improve education, engage communities, partner with private businesses and community organizations

One of the cabinet's goals will be to expand the "litter index," Streets Department data on which blocks have litter problems, and share it with the public.

"It would give the community a good idea of where they rate up amongst other neighborhoods," Esposito said.

For cleanup volunteers like Ray Gant, founder of the Ray of Hope Project, tackling garbage in Philadelphia is easier said than done, and a big part of it is people's attitudes.

"It's bad, it's bad," Gant said. "Our business corridors in the urban neighborhoods are atrocious … it's just sad."

In a city where illegal dumping is common, Gant said "lack of enforcement" is the biggest problem, along with the mentality people develop that litter is so common, it's not worth cleaning up.

"We gotta keep cleaning it up. If we don't, guess what, it's never gonna change," said Gant, who is currently working with a team of roughly 25 volunteers on semi-regular visits to some of the most trash-filled neighborhoods around the city, in places like Kensington, Frankford and Germantown.

"Some people in these neighborhoods are buying into that hope. So they come out and clean up," he said.

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Mummers eye return to South Philly route — and roots

A petition seeking the parade's original route is gaining support online.

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"It's where it belongs."

"So my kids can enjoy the traditions I grew up with."

"It's a parade for the people and not just a Center City money maker."

These are among the thousands of reasons offered by those who signed a petition looking to bring the Mummers Parade to its original South Philly route.

To Richard Mariani, who created the Change.org petition last week, the parade lacks connection to its community.

"The parade has always been on Broad Street. It started at Broad and Oregon and marched to City Hall," Mariani said. "What you see today is basically a 10-block parade that goes from Market Street around City Hall and ends on Washington Avenue."

In 2014, Mummers flipped their route, starting the festivities on Market Street, marching to City Hall for judging and continuing down Broad Street to Washington Avenue

"It ignores 90 percent of the very people who have supported it for over a century," the South Philly native added.

Mariani's not alone in his thinking. His petition has more than 1,200 supporters with a goal of 1,500.

Finnegan New Year's Brigade member Mike Inemer signed the petition, and later told Metro that although the parade originated in South Philly, it now involves people from all over Philadelphia, and many from South Jersey and Delaware.

"To all these folks, Philadelphia City Hall is still the icon of our town and it is nice, at least for one day, to reclaim the city that has been taken from us," Inemer said in an email.

"This is a nicer [and] more pleasant way of putting it: 'To reclaim the spirit of the parade they have been taking from us,'" he elaborated.

On that "spirit," Mariani put it a different way: "The city puts pressure to make it smaller, faster, more … internationally palatable."

A Mummer walks on New Year's Day 2014. CHARLES MOSTOLLER

Mariani said that "pressure" — like undergoing sensitivity training after their 2016 show, and moving its route — is disconnecting the parade from its roots.

He said the city and Mummers moved the parade two years ago in an attempt to market the international attraction to tourists — and to save a few bucks.

"It hasn't done anything for the city as far as tourism is concerned, because those people were coming here anyway," Mariani said.

But some say this new route is keeping longtime supporters away from the city.

"Families would come from all over, from Jersey, from New York, they would come visit their relatives down in Philly," Mariani said. "A lot of people that used to come into town to watch the parade don't come into town anymore."

"It's never gonna happen," Bill Duncan said.

Duncan, head of the Northeast Philly Polish American String Band, said Mayor Jim Kenney isn't for the Mummers, and won't change the route because the current one is shorter and costs less.

"The city don't want to go back to starting in South Philly," he said. "Mr. Kenney wants the parade to be one-two-three, but it's not the same."

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WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

ROB WONDERLING

I have always been fascinated with time.

Our five senses tell us time is linear — we are born, we live and grow old, and we die. Yet I remember learning in school that Albert Einstein concluded in his later years that the past, present and future all exist simultaneously. That idea really blew my 12-year-old mind!

I bring this up because I can't believe it is the last week of 2016 and I think time is actually accelerating. This is what my mother meant when she said, "Where does the time go?"

Though I'm not always successful, I try and view the world through the lens of abundance. 2016 was an extraordinary year, but I'm hopeful 2017 will be even better. Here's my list of to-do's for the new year for our nation, state, region and city.

Nation: Support our president-elect's plan to pass an audacious infrastructure bill. This will not only ensure our roads, highways and bridges are in a state of good repair, but will modernize our ports, water and wastewater systems, telecom, tier one research institutions, CNG refueling stations, and even promote the use of driverless vehicles that could remake how our economy operates. The Greater Philadelphia region is well positioned to take advantage of this initiative — building upon our superb assets such as SEPTA, Philadelphia International Airport and our ports.

State: Build a strong education system and a nimble and well-trained workforce, which is imperative to private sector success. We must invest in our citizens, providing high-skilled training and bridge what has been identified as a great divide between educators and employers so that we can align our labor supply with the market and where it is headed.

Region: Step up our efforts to work with all stakeholders in the 11-county Greater Philadelphia region to attract companies to locate and grow here. Select Greater Philadelphia Council highlights of our unique business assets to national and global audiences with the ultimate goal of growing the economic vibrancy of our collective community through attracting new businesses and new jobs.

City: Lift up all citizens of Philadelphia. Our poverty rate of 26 percent is unacceptable. While Philadelphia is having a renaissance of sorts, we must do more to ensure no one is left behind. Efforts to provide quality pre-K for all children, summer jobs for teens, business apprenticeships for young adults and ongoing education for adults are important steps to ensure inclusion for all Philadelphians. The Chamber's Roadmap for Growth initiative is working with partners throughout Philadelphia's neighborhoods on a shared agenda of growth and prosperity.

Another universally acclaimed thinker, Mick Jagger, sang "Time is on my side." So I'm going to begin 2017 with gratefulness in my heart and a list of resolutions to accomplish to help lift up our country, commonwealth and community.

Happy new year.

Rob Wonderling is president and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia.

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Rebranding state's liquor business falls short of serving consumer, critics say

Several state liquor stores have been remodelled during the past year. PROVIDED

The state liquor board remodeled 33 stores and added two new stores during the past year.

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Convenience has become the watchword of the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board as it attempts to rebrand its consumer image by remodeling stores and adding new outlets.

But that may not be enough to silence those who argue that the state shouldn't be in the booze business.

The state liquor board has made strides in some policy changes this year. Select stores are opening their doors on Sundays and having extended hours throughout the week. The board remodeled 33 stores and added two new stores, according to its annual report. A new location in Philadelphia opened on Dec. 12 in Center City.

"Our mission has changed over time," said PLCB Director of Communications Elizabeth Brassell. "Now we're about convenience and access."

Remodeling projects have been dependent on lease terms of the individual stores — the state is investing in stores that have longer leases, she explained. Brassell declined to comment on how much is budgeted for such projects. The PLCB is trying to create a new image that is drastically different from the nod to prohibition that helped outline their policies in the 1930s.

Advocates of privatizing the industry say the efforts aren't enough to appeal to consumers and question the board's motivations for making the changes.

"It's fear," said liquor privatization advocate Lew Bryson. "I think everybody sees [the rebranding] for what it is: lipstick on a pig."

Remodeling stores doesn't do enough to better serve the consumer if the same selection is available, he said.

"Our mission has changed over time ... Now we're about convenience and access."

Elizabeth Brassell, PLCB director of communications

"They're moving a lot faster than I thought they would, although it's pretty much the same selection," he said.

The PLCB might be doing its best to appeal to consumers, but they may still miss the mark with younger generations.

"Millennial consumers are apt to spend more money on alcohol but they want to do with more variety," said wine blogger Joe Roberts. "Because there is so much information, they are less intimidated."

One popular trend is buying locally sourced beer, wine and spirits. Although the PLCB has some policies that are friendlier towards small distilleries, its process of choosing which products to put on shelves all over the state leaves some left out.

"As a Pennsylvania distillery, I can take advantage of their Made in Pennsylvania program," said distiller Dean Browne of Rowhouse Spirits. "They essentially allow you to pick 10 stores to put your product in. But if you want access to the entire Pennsylvania market, you have to go through this full listing process. They never give you the metrics to determine what they're going to put on the shelves."

Browne said that if applications were denied, the PLCB wouldn't tell him or other distillers why. He said he has gone through the process several times and has resigned to selling his product out of his Frankford Avenue distillery, and doing wholesale distribution in other states. When it comes to selling his award-winning gin and other spirits in an expanded local market, Browne will wait to see if the PLCB policies change.

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Philadelphia prof critical of university's response to his 'White Genocide' tweet

Drexel called George Ciccariello-Maher's comments "utterly reprehensible, deeply disturbing."

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A Philly professor's Twitter wish for a "White Genocide" Christmas is attracting scorn, death threats and a smattering of support for his First Amendment rights.

On Christmas Eve, George Ciccariello-Maher, an associate professor of political science at Drexel University, tweeted "All I Want for Christmas is White Genocide."

The tweet went viral on Breitbart, a so-called alt-right news site.

The response to his tweet, Ciccariello-Maher claimed, was "hundreds of death threats" including a "coordinated smear campaign" against him. He said the tweet was meant to be satirical.

"White genocide is a figment of the racist imagination. It should be mocked, and I'm glad to have mocked it," Ciccariello-Maher, who is white, wrote in a statement posted on ResistancePHL, a local socialist group.

George Ciccariello-Maher is an associate professor at Drexel University. YOUTUBE

"All I Want for Christmas is White Genocide."
George Ciccariello-Maher

Satirical or not, news sites including Breitbart and Daily Caller reported on the tweets as evidence of racism. They quoted a follow-up tweet on Christmas "To clarify: when the whites were massacred during the Haitian revolution, that was a good thing indeed."

The professor's Twitter account has since been made private.

Drexel indicated that Ciccariello-Maher's "inflammatory" tweet would lead to a meeting with school authorities.

"While the University recognizes the right of its faculty to freely express their thoughts and opinions in public debate, Professor Ciccariello-Maher's comments are utterly reprehensible, deeply disturbing, and do not in any way reflect the values of the University," Drexel said in an online statement. "The University is taking this situation very seriously. We contacted Ciccariello-Maher today to arrange a meeting to discuss this matter in detail."

An expanded version of this story can be seen at metro.us

BRIEF

Pennsylvania woman hikes 26 miles to rescue family from Grand Canyon blizzard

An Easton, Pennsylvania, woman hiked for 26 miles in freezing temperatures and rugged terrain as she tried to rescue her husband and son after the family got stranded in snow near the Grand Canyon.

Karen Klein, 36, her husband Eric, 37, and their 10-year-old son Isaac went on a weeklong trip to Las Vegas. On Thursday, they headed to the Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona to go sightseeing, the Morning Call reported.

When the family discovered the state road leading to the canyon's North Rim was closed because of snow, they sought an alternate route along a forest road. There, their rental car got stuck in a ditch, Coconino County Sheriff Jim Driscoll told The Associated Press.

Klein, a Northampton Community College professor, is also a marathon runner and triathlete. The family decided she was in the best shape to continue the journey on foot to find help.

"She's in really good shape. Had she not been, she wouldn't have made it," Driscoll said.

But Klein wasn't wearing snow gear. After heading to a main road about 10 miles away — which was also closed — she decided to walk toward a Grand Canyon park entrance after spotting a highway sign. That was another 14 miles.

"That instinct just kicks in," Klein told NBC10. "You have to protect your family. You just keep driving forward. You just have to keep moving forward."

By Friday afternoon, Klein came across an abandoned park ranger cabin. She broke the window and took refuge inside the unheated structure, keeping warm under a few blankets.

Karen Klein, right, and her son Isaac. FACEBOOK

Around the same time, Eric Klein and Isaac were found. They had agreed to stay in the car while Klein hiked, but Eric traveled to higher ground for cell phone service to contact authorities.

Klein wasn't found until early Saturday morning. Klein was in stable condition in an intensive care unit at a hospital in Utah, her twin sister, Kristen Haase, said Sunday. Eric and Isaac were treated for hypothermia and released.

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Reasons Philadelphia seemed to suck in 2016

Sorry, not sorry.

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In 2016, it was worse. TEMPLE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

One of my favorite ads about Philadelphia needs an update to reflect the last year.

In the 1970s, a billboard welcoming visitors traveling into the city via Interstate 76 declared that "Philadelphia isn't as bad as Philadelphians say it is."

But as 2016 comes to a close, I'd like to offer a more apt tagline: "Philadelphia isn't as great as Philadelphians say it is."

That's not to say there wasn't plenty to celebrate — and celebrate it we must. Philadelphia fully emerged from its cruel nickname as the "sixth borough," and beat out other East Coast cities as a top travel destination; it became a home and hub for millennials with its vibrant nightlife and affordable rent; and gave birth to things that are just so Philly, like dumpster pools and a pot pop-up party.

But this year also brought political upsets, transit failures, public health hazards and perennially disappointed sports fans. In short, it seriously sucked.

Seeing lead

In February, we learned that more than 10 percent of Philly's kids tested positive for elevated blood lead levels — more than three times the recorded number in Flint, Michigan. We did the math for you: that's 2,700 of the city's youth exposed to the toxin.

In Flint, aging service lines leached lead into the city's water supply. But here, poison was already in our homes, chipping off the walls and spreading dust particles — mostly in North and Northwest Philly. Also unlike Flint, the problem here never spiked; it's chronic.

In October, state Sen. Vincent Hughes said it was "worse than the situation in Flint," and the high exposure rates were "simply unacceptable."

And again this month, Mayor Jim Kenney vowed renewed action on the fight against lead poisoning by putting pressure on landlords and Licenses and Inspections officials, and changing the city code.

Sheisty pols

Time for a roll call: Chaka Fattah, Kathleen Kane, Vince Fenerty, Dawn Segal and Angeles Roca, Larry Farnese, Leslie Acosta.

That's a former senator, the former state attorney general, the former head of the Philadelphia Parking Authority, two former Philly judges, a former state senator and a state representative — all of whom abused their power of position while receiving a pay stub from the city or state. There are many more we'd like to add to that list, but their crimes haven't been proven. Yet.

In short, Philly's politicians have not enjoyed a year of positive PR. Stories of crooked pols and bad cops here aren't anything new, but neither is the public's complacency.

The Democratic National Convention

Sure, the DNC was a fantastic opportunity to bring Democrats and celebrities from all over the country to our humble city. Under Mayor Kenney and DNC chair-slash-former Mayor Ed Rendell's oversight, Center City sparkled a little brighter, albeit briefly.

The real misfortune in the DNC isn't that we spent our time and effort on a candidate who didn't win — at least not according to the Electoral College. It's that we let democracy fail, here in the birthplace of democracy.

It wasn't until Clinton's path to victory was clear and anticipated that Democratic National Committee Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman-Schultz's emails revealed bias against Bernie Sanders. Many emails leaked suggested the committee overseeing the convention was trying to undermine his campaign.

And at the Wells Fargo Center, we spoke with delegates who claimed they were threatened, censored and silenced by fellow party members for views that didn't align with Clinton's.

The party's actions in Philly set a dangerous precedent: ignore those who don't agree with us. And we can now see this play out on the national scale, as a jagged chasm between Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and progressives, grows deeper.

Hate crimes

In the first 10 days after President-elect Donald Trump's victory, Philly saw a spike in hate crimes. There were swastikas, racist group texts, Confederate flags and plenty of graffiti.

Philly fit in with a trend spreading across the country. The Southern Poverty Law Center reported more than 1,000 hate crimes across the nation in the month since Election Day.

An expanded version of this story can be seen at metro.us

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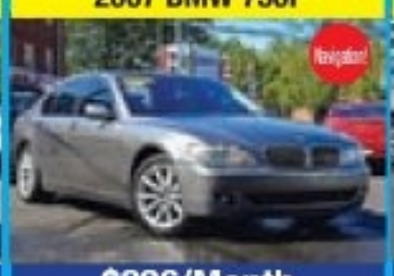

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2011 Nissan Murano — Sun Roof! — $274/Month

2011 Lexus CT 200H — Hybrid! — $274/Month

2012 Infiniti M37 — Navigation! — $290/Month

2011 Honda Odyssey EX-L — Leather! — $290/Month

2008 Lexus RX 350 — Low Miles! — $290/Month

2013 Nissan Quest — Backup Cam! — $307/Month

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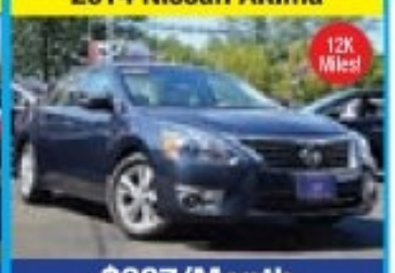

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Obama says he would have outrun Trump, but Trump tweets 'No way!'

Trump will assume his first public office when he succeeds Obama on Jan. 20. He defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton on Nov. 8 with a promise to clean up Washington.

Could President Obama have won a third term, if the Constitution allowed it, and defeated Donald Trump? Cast your vote in Metro's poll at **metro.us/third-term**

President Barack Obama shakes hands as he meets with Republican President-elect Donald Trump on transition planning in the Oval Office at the White House on Nov. 10, 2016. GETTY IMAGES

President Barack Obama said in an interview broadcast on Monday that he would have won most Americans' support if he had been able to run against Donald Trump for a third term.

"No way!" Trump countered in a tweet, citing as liabilities U.S. companies taking jobs overseas, the fight against Islamic State militants and Obama's signature health-care law.

Barred by the Constitution from seeking a third four-year term, the president told his former adviser David Axelrod in a podcast that Americans would have backed Obama's vision.

"I'm confident that if I had run again and articulated it, I think I could've mobilized a majority of the American people to rally behind it," Obama said, referring to his 2008 campaign message of hope and change.

In a tweet, Clinton spokesman Brian Fallon said Obama would have beaten Trump and Clinton would have won if not for an FBI statement shortly before the election disclosing new material on Clinton's email practices as secretary of state.

Clinton's aides have said FBI Director James Comey's announcement, which led to no charges, swung the election, a charge Trump's team has dismissed.

Obama said Clinton "performed wonderfully under really tough circumstances." He said she focused on Trump's flaws and could have argued more that the Democratic Party agenda helped working people.

Trump garnered more than 270 of the 538 state-by-state electoral votes to win the presidency. Clinton won 48.2 percent of the popular vote compared with 46.1 percent for Trump, according to the Associated Press. REUTERS

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Holiday weekend provides no respite from Chicago's violence

Chicago's holiday weekend was marred by bouts of gunfire and a dozen killings, continuing a yearlong surge in violence in the third largest U.S. city that has pushed the number of murders to a nearly two-decade high.

Police blamed gang conflicts for much of the violence.

From Dec. 23-26, there were 44 shooting incidents in the city of 2.7 million and 12 people were killed, according to the Chicago Police Department. The number of murders in Chicago stands at 754 for the year.

The murder rate is the highest since 1997, when 761 people were killed.

"These were deliberate and planned shootings by one gang against another," Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson said at news conference on Monday. "They were targeted knowing fully well that individuals would be at the homes of family and friends celebrating the holiday."

Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson GETTY IMAGES

Ninety-percent of those fatally wounded during the weekend had gang affiliation, criminal history and were pre-identified by technology used by the police department to recognize people who might be involved in gun violence, Johnson said.

Johnson, who was appointed as the city's top police officer in March, has railed this year against the light sentences handed down to repeat gun offenders, saying they have emboldened shooters who do not fear the repercussions.

At an event for business and civic leaders earlier this month, Johnson said gang members believe the judicial system in Cook County, which includes Chicago, is a joke.

Johnson also has spoken out against what he has described as a national narrative that portrays police officers in a negative manner. REUTERS

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George Michael's partner expresses sadness at finding musician dead

George Michael's partner has spoken of his sadness at discovering the 53-year-old musician, a multimillion selling idol of 1980s and 1990s pop, dead at his Oxfordshire home on Christmas morning.

British police said the death of Michael, who had a turbulent private life and problems with drugs, was "unexplained but not suspicious." His manager, Michael Lippman, said the singer had died of heart failure, according to the BBC.

"It's a Xmas I will never forget finding your partner dead peacefully in bed first thing in the morning," Fadi Fawas, 43, said in a tweet posted late on Monday. "I will never stop missing you xxx."

Michael's fans continued to pay tribute at his homes in north London and at the riverside mansion where he died, leaving flowers, cards and candles. Musicians such as Madonna, Paul McCartney and Elton John praised his talent and warm sense of humor.

With pinup good looks and soulful voice, Michael burst onto the pop scene in the 1980s as one half of Wham!, one of the most successful pop duos ever.

Singles like "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go" and "Careless Whisper" were hits with Wham! before he reinvented himself as a solo artist with sexually daring and heartfelt lyrics in multimillion-selling albums like "Faith" and "Listen Without Prejudice." REUTERS

Flowers, candles and messages left by well-wishers and fans in tribute are seen outside the home of late British singer George Michael in north London on Dec. 27, 2016, two days after the singer died on Christmas Day. GETTY IMAGES

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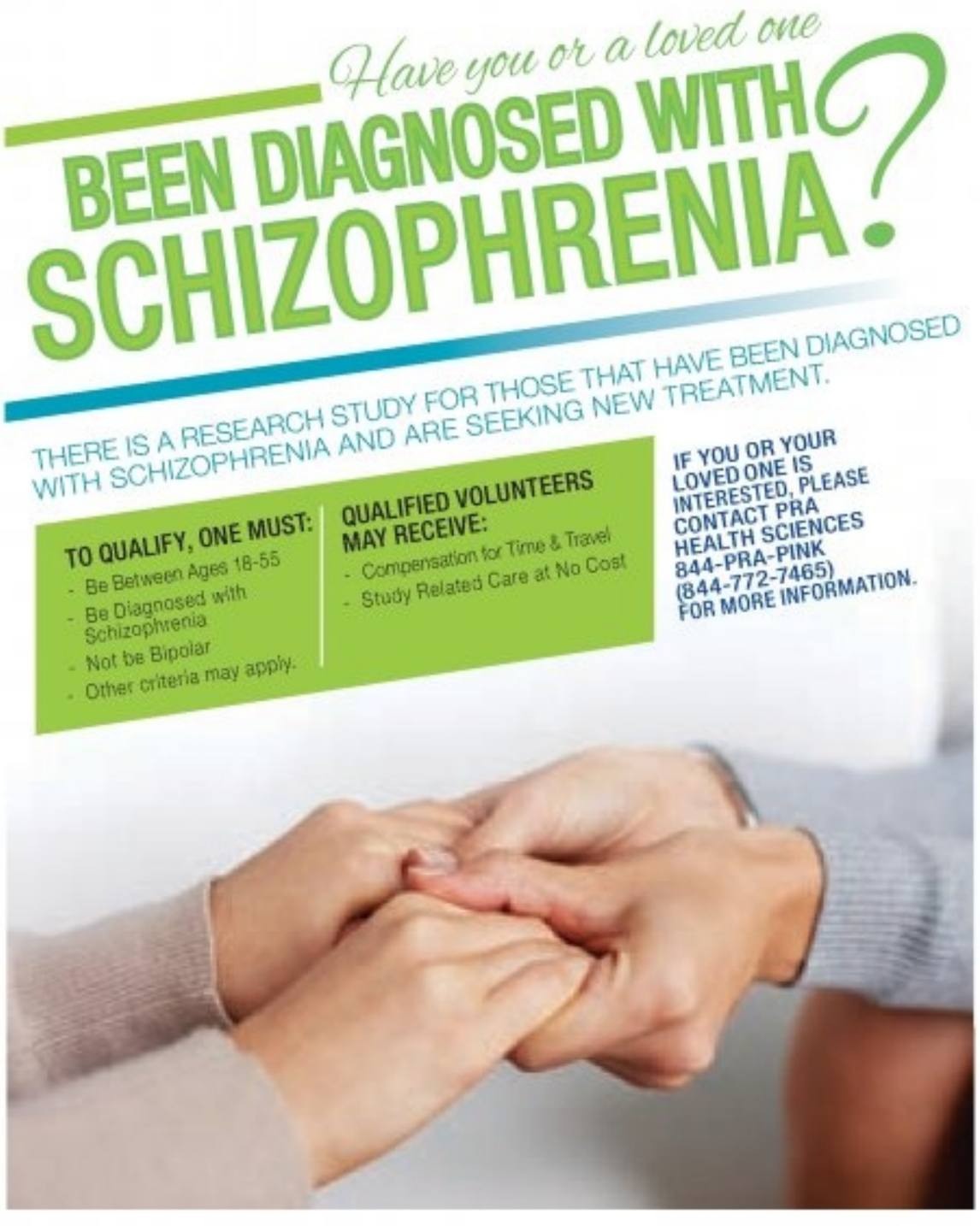
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The buzziest pop culture moments of 2016

SESALI BOWEN

Sour twist of "Lemonade"

Queen Bey's album "Lemonade" told a story of infidelity some thought to be Bey and husband Jay Z. The social-media hunt for "Becky with the good hair" (the mistress) forced more than one celeb to defend herself — from Rachel Roy to (a very mistaken) Rachael Ray.

Kim Kardashian's Paris robbery

The events of Oct. 2 are going to go down in history as one of the most significant incidents in pop culture. Kim Kardashian was in her hotel room during Paris Fashion Week when several men armed with guns entered her private suite, tied her up and stole nearly $10 million in jewelry.

The mannequin challenge

Rae Sremmurd finally got the props they deserved when the #mannequinchallenge froze the internet. Everyone from Hillary Clinton, Bon Jovi and her campaign team to Blac Chyna and Rob in the delivery room was striking a pose and holding it to the hip-hop duo's hit "Black Beatles."

Brangelina's divorce

Celebs get married and divorced all the time. No big deal. But those celeb aren't always Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, the power couple who seemed indestructible. But alas, after nearly a decade as domestic partners, they couldn't make marriage work for a full two years. And to top it off, the ongoing divorce is messy. Angie accused Brad of child abuse, he was forced to submit to drug testing and now they're ironing out the details of a nasty custody war.

Keeping up with Blac Chyna

Blac Chyna became a phoenix rising from the ashes when she hooked up with Kylie Jenner's older brother this year. The couple got engaged in April, and welcomed a baby girl, Dream Kardashian, in November. And now they're trying to find a resolution after a huge (and very public) fight turned physical, spilling onto social media. Good luck, you krazy kids.

The ups and downs of Kanye West

Yeezy had a rough year. During his Yeezy Season 4 fashion show in September, models fainted in the heat. His wife was robbed a month later. He ended up on Trump's side in the election, even though he didn't vote. And then he suffered a breakdown and was hospitalized. His tour was canceled. But West's misfortune sparked another much-needed conversation about mental health in pop culture.

Celebs and mental health

Many stars opened up about personal demons. Zayn Malik wrote of an eating disorder. Lady Gaga revealed she has PTSD. And Selena Gomez and Kid Cudi were both treated for depression and anxiety.

Michael Strahan's Strexit

In April, Michael Strahan announced he would be leaving "Live With Kelly and Michael" to join the team at "Good Morning America." Turns out co-host Kelly Ripa found out at the same time we did — and she didn't take that well. Ripa didn't show up to work for a week following the news. And when she returned the following Tuesday, it was pretty awkward. Strahan has since transitioned to his new TV home, and Kelly still doesn't have a new co-host. You don't need him, girl!

ALL PHOTOS GETTY UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE

Celebrity deaths

The deaths of boxing legend Muhammad Ali and artists David Bowie and Prince shook the world. Hip-hop heads mourned Tribe Called Quest's Phife Dawg and D4L's Shawty Lo. Alan Thicke and pro-wrestler Chyna also left us. These were really the salt in the bizarre wound that is 2016. Jan. 1 can't come soon enough. Here's to a normal 2017.

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Music's most defining moments of 2016

RACHEL RACZKA

LEMONADE

Is there anyone who exemplifies a force of nature quite like Beyonce? (No, the answer is no.) This album spawned a million think pieces (on race, on women, on music, on marriage, on film, on pop culture, on the inexplicable streaming nonsense that is Tidal), bent genre/award show norms and probably really ruined Rachel Roy's year. "Lemonade," from an album standpoint, is Beyonce's most musically advanced and personal album to date, but the thematic masterpiece also, more importantly, challenged industry standards for how music is promoted and presented.

Sorrow and silver linings

This year the industry sadly lost several musical titans — Bowie! Cohen! Prince! — leaving us with no shortage of tributes, covers and think pieces. While nothing can quite make up for the creative void, we gained a year of reliving happy memories and old classics. Among some of the best tributes: Sinéad O'Connor's "Life on Mars," Bruce Springsteen's "Purple Rain" and Kate McKinnon as Hillary Clinton's "Hallelujah."

Mr. Nice Guy wins the top 40

Let's hear it for the nice guys. Walking the road paved by boy band One Direction, Drake, Shawn Mendes, Justin Bieber, Troye Sivan and Charlie Puth dominated the 2016 pop charts, cooing their "we're not worthy"-ness to legions of female fans. Leaving us to believe that Generation Selfie isn't so self-centered after all.

No thanks, North Carolina

The HB2 "Bathroom" Bill that restricted transgender people to use facilities that matched their birth certificates had a trickle-down effect to touring artists who opted out of tour dates in North Carolina. Bruce Springsteen, Maroon 5, Pearl Jam, Demi Lovato and Nick Jonas and Ringo Starr were among the acts that took a stand against the discriminatory act, canceling tour dates and staging protests. A good reminder that an artist's voice isn't just used to sing with.

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE

The life and fall of Pablo

Kanye West never had to prove that he was a top-notch entertainer. There was evidence of his greatness as far back as his catalog goes. However, "Pablo" was more than an album— it was his opus. There was the fashion, the flying stage, the "Famous" video — followed the tour cancellation, the hospitalization, the visit to Trump Tower. West, himself, was as mesmerizing as any visual album.

Your required listening for 2016

"BROCCOLI" — D.R.A.M. ft. Lil Yachty
"When We Were Young" — Adele
"Black Beatles" — Rae Sremmurd ft. Gucci Mane
"Intern" — Angel Olsen
"Daddy Lessons" — Beyonce
"Famous" — Kanye West
"We Don't Talk Anymore" — Charlie Puth ft. Selena Gomez
"Love on the Brain" — Rihanna
"Fake Love" — Drake
"Cranes in the Sky" — Solange
"Redbone" — Childish Gambino
"No Problem" — Chance the Rapper ft. 2 Chainz & Lil Wayne
"Million Reasons" — Lady Gaga
"Three Packs a Day" — Courtney Barnett
"80s Mercedes" — Maren Morris
"Your Best American Girl" — Mitski

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The top 10 films of 2016

This wasn't a good year. But it was a good year for movies. Blockbusters weren't too hot, and many of them failed miserably. But if you did some digging, especially around the art house, you could find some diamonds in the rough. Here are 10 worth searching out.

MATT PRIGGE

10 "O.J.: Made in America"

You could tell the story of O.J. Simpson in a standard two-hour doc. Or you could spend close to eight hours getting it right. Exhaustive but never exhausting, Ezra Edelman's addictive, supersize study of the football-turned-possible-murderer takes a deep dive into the rare life that's unfolded like a tragic novel. Along the way Simpson's story speaks to race, fame, self-delusion and the way the media turns the masses into irrational dittoheads.

9 "Moonlight"

It certainly sounds Important: A movie that follows a shy boy named Chiron from a low-income black neighborhood as he ages into a bullied, closeted teen and finally into a grill'd-out young adult thug. That might have gotten viewers in the seats, but what's great about Barry Jenkins' three-part drama is the way it resists easy classification. It finds its own unique path, and by the end, it's transcendent.

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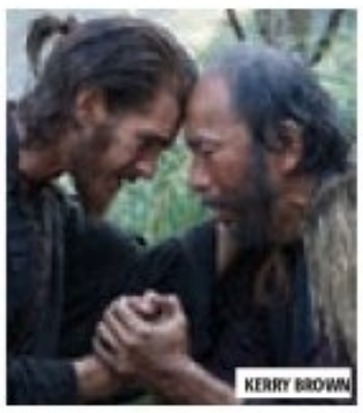
8 "The Nice Guys"

Let's pretend any award Ryan Gosling scores for "La La Land" is really for his turn in Shane Black's wacka-doodle detective lark. The best Gosling is goofball Gosling, and as a private dick in 1970s Los Angeles, he stumbles off balconies, does his best Lou Costello and performs slapstick with a bathroom stall door. He's just another ace part of Black's coal-black comedic mystery, with its unceasing one-liners and loopy twists and one of the greatest and weirdest plant-and-payoff gags in history. (It involved a talking bee voiced by Hannibal Buress.)

7 "Certain Women"

It takes a while for the latest from Kelly Reichardt ("Wendy and Lucy") to really hit you. While it's on, the three stories within seem almost sleepily mundane — even the one where Laura Dern's lawyer gets involved in a hostage situation. Give it time, though, and it lingers — as a look at minor heartaches that haunt us for all our days, as a study of women quietly eking by in a world hostile toward their presence.



6 "Silence"

Thank God "The Wolf of Wall Street" was a hit; it meant Martin Scorsese could persuade a studio to fund his $50 million priest movie. The often keyed-up Scorsese shoots the tale of Jesuit priests (Andrew Garfield and Adam Driver) facing danger in anti-Christian 17th century Japan in hushed, slowly paced shots. It's a safe space in which to ruminate on faith, doubt and a filmmaker who's doing some of his best work well into his 70s.

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5 "Paterson"

Talk about good timing: Jim Jarmusch's typically chill look at a week in the life of a poet/bus driver (Adam Driver) is the soothing antidote we need to the horrors outside movie theaters. Not that we want to make it sound topical. Like all Jarmusches, it was always made to exist on its own plane of existence. Nothing much happens to Driver's Paterson, and every day is basically the same. But that's not depressing; it's beautiful. Best mutt of the year, too.

MARY CYBULSKI

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

4 "Elle"

Isabelle Huppert and director Paul Verhoeven were the year's best couple. It was only a matter of time before the bad boy of "Basic Instinct" teamed up with France's iciest ice queen. And when they did, wouldn't you know they'd make a rude, darkly comic yet insightful look at a woman who's been sexually assaulted? It looks for all the world like a tasteful French character study, yet it's the most messed up film Verhoeven's ever made.

3 "Everybody Wants Some!!"

Like "Paterson," Richard Linklater's "spiritual sequel" to "Dazed and Confused" — a hangout movie among collegiate dudes in 1980 Austin — is pure escapism. Who knew to the cure to the world's annoyances were collegiate baseball bros? That's the Linklater touch: No one loves people more than he does, and it always shows.

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2 'Manchester by the Sea'

The movie we laughed at the most this year is, as it happens, also the year's saddest movie. A brutally honest look at the grieving process was also a study of Massholes at their most hilariously Massholiest. As Casey Affleck's sadsack struggles with the headaches, major and minor, of his brother's death, he also trades barbs with anyone and everyone. We laugh, as they say, so as not to cry, especially during a mid-film maelstrom of tears when we finally learn the tragic episode tucked deep in our punchy protagonist's past.

CLAIRE FOGLER

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

1 'Toni Erdmann'

OK, so it has almost the same plot as the Adam Sandler outing "That's My Boy." And OK, it doesn't sound like a movie for the masses, being a comedy from Germany that runs nearly three hours. And yet Maren Ade's shaggy dog epic, about a workaholic (Sandra Huller) whose life is upended by her goofy, fake teeth-wearing father (Peter Simonischek), boasts more than at least three of year's funniest set pieces. You'll laugh and cry, but laugh most of all.

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Best TV moments of 2016

Spoiler alert: "Game of Thrones" isn't on here.

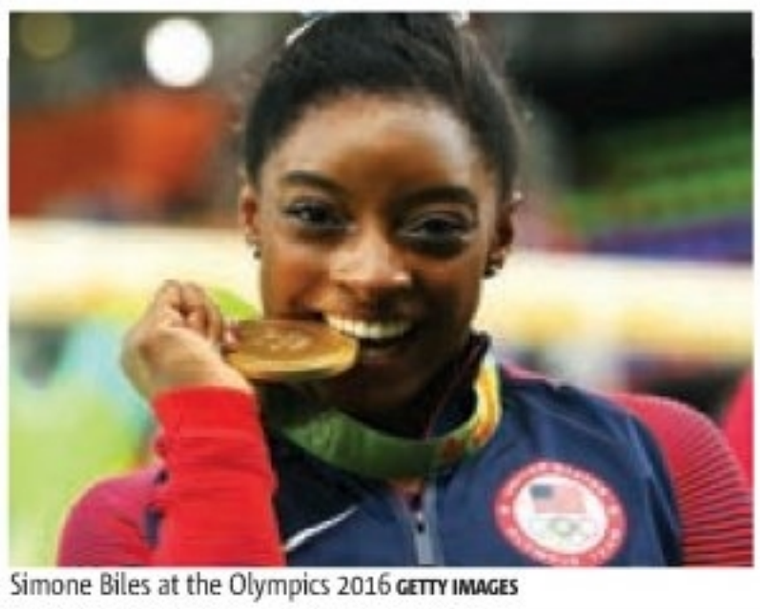
JENNIFER LOGUE

It has been a fiercely competitive year in television. With newer streaming platforms competing alongside network titans, the quest for viewership is a wild frontier, and TV fans are reaping the benefits of boundary-pushing programming. We rounded up some of the most memorable moments from the past year, which include out-of-the-box ways to pass a drug test, going for Olympic gold and the evergreen feel-good power of "Love Actually."

Sheriff Jim Hopper investigates in "Stranger Things." CURTIS BAKER/NETFLIX

Will's body is a dummy ("Stranger Things")

In one of the most eerie scenes on the hit Netflix show, "Stranger Things" Hopper breaks into the morgue to see if Will's body is the real deal. Dread and anticipation mix as his pocket knife cuts open the boy's body to reveal it is actually a dummy. Given that autopsies aren't typically performed on television, this is as "gut-wrenching" as it gets.



Simone Biles at the Olympics 2016 GETTY IMAGES

"Search Party" is a surprise hit

If you love eccentric characters, New York City and mystery, the new TBS show "Search Party" is next on your binge-watch list. In it, Dory (Alia Shawkat) is on a mission to find a college acquaintance who's gone missing, and along the way, discovers more about herself and encounters some pretty quirky characters. All of Season 1 is available for streaming and after only being released Nov. 21, it's already been renewed for a second season. Don't be the last of your friends to the party.

Olympics: Simone Biles' floor routine

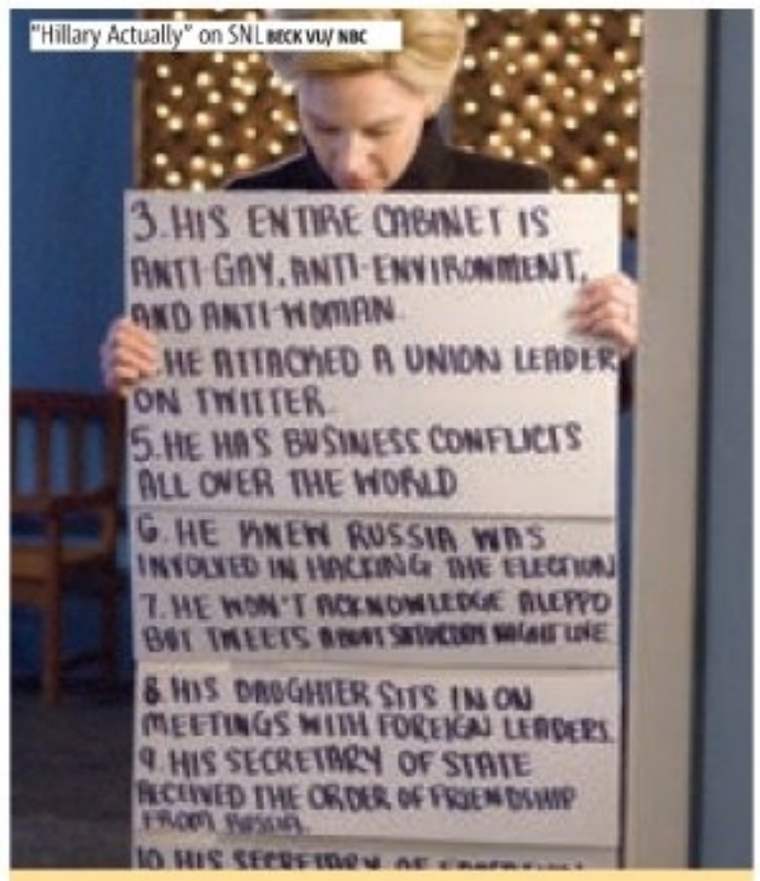
Simone Biles dazzled the world with her iconic floor routine at the 2016 Summer Olympic games. Set to Brazilian sounds, her enthusiasm, energy and superhuman skill (did you see her double twisting-double-back move?) earned her four gold medals and set a new record for women's gymnastics.

The drug test on "Atlanta"

In this episode of "Atlanta" — Donald Glover's critically acclaimed FX show — Van does her best to stay on the straight and narrow, but, of course, she gets high the night before her drug test at work. Running out of options, she gets her daughter's dirty diapers, extracts the urine from them and straps the pee to her leg in an empty condom. Does her creative scheme win her this pissing contest? We won't give away any more details here, but this episode gets even nastier.

RuPaul wins an Emmy

RuPaul Charles got nominated for an Emmy for the first time in his career as host of the show "RuPaul's Drag Race." Competing alongside other hosting heavy-hitters like Ryan Seacrest and Tim Gunn at the Emmy's this year, the drag supermodel didn't expect to win — but he did, inspiring people around the world who "dance to the beat of a different drummer."


"Hillary Actually" on SNL BECK VU/ NBC
3. HIS ENTIRE CABINET IS ANTI-GAY, ANTI-ENVIRONMENT, AND ANTI-WOMAN
4. HE ATTACKED A UNION LEADER ON TWITTER.
5. HE HAS BUSINESS CONFLICTS ALL OVER THE WORLD
6. HE KNEW RUSSIA WAS INVOLVED IN HACKING THE ELECTION
7. HE WON'T ACKNOWLEDGE ALEPPO BUT TWEETS ABOUT SNL
8. HIS DAUGHTER SITS IN ON MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN LEADERS
9. HIS SECRETARY OF STATE

"Hillary Actually" on "SNL"

The 2003 film "Love Actually" is required seasonal viewing for many, so the timing of the "SNL" spoof —just ahead of the holidays and the Electoral College vote—couldn't have been more perfect. A still-hopeful Hillary attempts to sway an elector with cue cards, imitating the scene in which Keira Knightley's character is silently wooed by an admirer. Trump is still president-elect, but hey, at least we have sketch comedy gems like this to get us through the next four years.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE:

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3416 James Mattiaccio • 3501 Howard Davenport
3522 Tanesha Grand-Pierre • 3702 Kara Inez • 4309 Demaris Bryant
4612 Erick Crawford • 4619 Raelynn Cabrera • 4630 Lamont Williams
4730 Judith Refuse • 5522 Antoinette Robinson

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned will sell, to satisfy lien of the owner, by public on January 11th 2016 at 10:00 am via www.StorageTreasures.com. Compass Self Storage 12 E Oregon Ave Philadelphia, PA 19148

2129 Joseph Lord • 1218 Louis Pavoni
2011 Melvin Carey • 2035 Karen Faulds

The personal goods stored therein by the following may include, but are not limited to general household, furniture, boxes, clothes, and appliances.
The winning bid can be made with cash, debit, or credit card at the time of sale. All goods are sold as is and must be removed within 24 hours of winning bid. Compass Self Storage reserves the right to refuse any bid. Sale is subject to adjournment.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned will sell, to satisfy lien of the owner, by public sale for competitive bidding to begin on January 11th, 2016 at 12:00 pm via www.StorageTreasures.com Compass Self Storage 1300 Belmont Ave Philadelphia, PA 19104

1015 Sharee McLaughlin • 2078 Christine V Randall • 1024 Akeem Devero
3056 Charles Gibson • 7043 Joseph Wilson • 7029 Micheux Jordan • 1076 Florence Lewis
4004 James Rogers • 6076 Leamon Troublefield Jr • 2141 Devan Mckie
2137 Judson L Washington • 1036 Ione Watson • 3005 Darrell Braxton
2030 Travis Jackson • 2057 Leonard Covey • 6034 Bree Martin • 2108 Nadira Stephens
8183 Keisha Montague • 7087 Tianna Shinholster

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MING SELF STORAGE

Notice of Auction Sale is herein given by Ming Self Storage, 720 North 5th Street Philadelphia, PA 19123 will take place on www.StorageTreasures.com. Sale by competitive bidding starting on 1/2/17 and ending on 1/11/17 at 12:00 PM to satisfy unpaid rent and charges on the following accounts:

024 Estate of Norman Millman, boxes

The contents of each unit will be sold as a lot and all items must be removed from the premises within 72 hours. Owners may redeem their goods by paying all rent and charges due at any time before sale.

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A057 Shana Simon, bed frame, boxes, refrigerator
B2128 Wayne A Davis, bed computer monitor, sofa
B2062 Maurice McNeil, boxes
A038 Angel Sheared, bags, boxes, sofa
B2087 Chris A Hollis bags, mattress, boxes, bed frame
A027 Chris Williams, suitcases, boxes, bags

The contents of each unit will be sold as a lot and all items must be removed from the premises within 72 hours. Owners may redeem their goods by paying all rent and charges due at any time before sale.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Notice is hereby given that Storage King USA will sell the contents of the storage units listed below at a public auction to satisfy a lien placed on the contents (pursuant to 73 PS). The sales will take place on 1/10/17. The sale will be conducted on StorageStuff.Bid, under the guidance of Christopher Rosa (AU006857) on behalf of the facilities' mgmnt. Units will be available for viewing prior to the sale on StorageStuff.Bid. Contents will be sold for cash only to the highest bidder. A 10% buyer's premium will be charged and $100 (units larger than 150 sq ft will be more) cleaning deposit per unit. All sales are final. Seller reserves the right to withdraw the property at any time before the sale or to refuse any bids. The property to be sold is described as "general household items" unless otherwise noted. Storage King USA at 335 E. Price St., Philadelphia PA 19144 will list storage units on the website StorageStuff.Bid at 11:00 a.m. 1/10/17 or up to 7 days prior to this date.

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#2361 - TIFFANY HUDSON - HOUSEHOLD • #1073 - CASSANDRA COOLEY - HOUSEHOLD • #2128 - DOMONIQUE WOODS - HOUSEHOLD
#1002A - SHERMAN MITCHELL - HOUSEHOLD • #2043 - DARRYL GREER - HOUSEHOLD • #1061 - KATINA GIDDINGS - HOUSEHOLD

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Anthony Pauling Unit #2065 • Shaunise S Walker Unit #4022 • Christopher Ryan Robinson Unit #1089
Susan K Maddy-Bishop Unit #2326 • Billy Mclean Unit #3053 • Felicia Nicole Moore Unit #4019
Lakiesha S Coston Unit #2069 • Tiffany M Hodges Unit #3131 • Lorene B Jones Unit #3048
Maria A Legg Unit #3062 • Quidel D Wilkerson Unit #2156 • April Sue Wagg Unit #2316
Stephanie Johnson Unit #3040 • Leonard W Patterson Unit #2299

Jenny McCarthy gears up for "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve" GETTY IMAGES

Jenny McCarthy dishes on how she met her husband on New Year's Eve

The vivacious Jenny McCarthy wears many hats, but Dec. 31, she will be reporting live from Times Square for "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve" for the seventh year in a row. The evening will be hosted by Ryan Seacrest and include performances from DNCE and Mariah Carey.

For McCarthy, being a part of the televised magic on New Year's Eve holds a lot of meaning, especially because it's how she first met her husband, Donnie Wahlberg.

"My very first year, I was standing there with my microphone and the big performer we had was New Kids on the Block. I was standing in the street and I heard, 'Hi, Jenny McCarthy,'" she remembers. "And I turned around and it was Donnie and he was walking to the stage. He was 20 feet from me and just waved. I thought, 'That was cute — he knew who I was.'"

She admits she wishes he had said something more that night.

"He could have said something like, 'Could I kiss you?' I ended up kissing a stranger that year — a cop," she notes with a giggle.

Staying warm is less of a challenge with her husband around, but McCarthy still has a system in place. Being outside in Times Square for five hours in the cold is not for the faint of heart.

"I wear those heat stickers around my neck and down my back. I have seven turtlenecks. Seven pairs of pants," she reveals. "The problem is, my face starts to freeze. It's hard not to sound slurred when your face is frozen, so I run to 54th Street to the space heater once an hour to warm my face."

And what's it like continuing Dick Clark's New Year's Eve tradition?

"As a little girl in Chicago, I grew up watching Dick Clark. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I'd be holding an ABC mic that says, 'New Year's Rockin' Eve,'" McCarthy says.

The best piece of advice the late television and radio personality had for her was to not act cold.

"'Don't show how cold you actually are. You can talk about it, but don't show it,'" she remembers.

"Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin Eve With Ryan Seacrest" airs Saturday, Dec. 31 at 8 p.m. on ABC.

JENNIFER LOGUE

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Glen Macnow has been an outspoken voice in Philly sports for nearly three decades.
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Good riddance to 2016. What an abysmal year it was for local pro teams, who collectively lost nearly 60 percent of their games. Sports greatness passed from the Earth (Ali, Palmer, Howe, Buddy Ryan and Ed Snider). The Phils said goodbye to the last vestiges of 2008 and "The Process" continued its inexorable crawl.

I can't change any of that. But in the spirit of the holidays, and after several spiked eggnogs, here's my gift — a vision of what things could look like if, just for once, everything went *right* in the upcoming year.

My dream for 2017:

EAGLES

My dream

The Birds sign free agent Alshon Jeffery and release all their current WRs, save Jordan Matthews. They use that first-rounder from Minnesota to draft a shutdown corner, say Marlon Humphrey from Alabama. Second-round pick Christian McCaffrey rushes for 1,000 yards. Howie Roseman looks like a genius.

Lane Johnson stays clean, Jason Peters plays one more solid season and youngsters Halapoulivaati Vaitai and Isaac Seumalo give the offensive line foundation for the future. Doug Pederson hands the play calling off to offensive coordinator Frank Reich, who aids the development of Carson Wentz by not throwing the ball 50 times a game. Pederson also learns that being Mr. Nice Guy doesn't work in the NFL, so forces the first transgressor of training camp to push a blocking sled under the hot sun for an afternoon. Then cuts him.

Can Carson Wentz return even better in 2017? ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Realistic chances

McCaffrey probably won't make it out of the first round. And I'm not sure Pederson can ever play the tough guy. Other than that, nothing seems farfetched.

PHILLIES

My dream

The Next Generation arrives. By summer, Jorge Alfaro is gunning down baserunners and clearing the CBP fences. Nick Williams gains maturity and becomes the five-hole hitter. Roman Quinn plays like a young Shane Victorino. Shortstop prospect J.P Crawford's bat develops so that the Phils can trade Cesar Hernandez for pitching and move Freddy Galvis to second base.

The best news is that Aaron Nola and Vinnie Velasquez stay healthy and develop into top-of-the-rotation starters. Zach Eflin and Jake Thompson arrive too, allowing GM Matt Klentak to parlay his older starters into helpful parts at the trade deadline.

Maikel Franco regains his stroke and Odubel Herrera plays all season like he did through last May (OPS of .871). Pete Mackanin wins Manager of the Year.

Realistic chances

Pretty slim, because baseball prospects are so iffy. And injured pitchers tend to get hurt again. But if even half of this comes true, the Phils should be over .500 in 2017.

FLYERS

My dream

Optimistically, they can win a round — maybe two — in this year's playoffs. This happens if notoriously inconsistent Steve Mason gets on one of those hot streaks where a goalie carries a team. Veterans Claude Giroux, Jakub Voracek and Wayne Simmonds all finish the season among the NHL's top 20 scoring leaders. The biggest upside is the development of 19-year-old defenseman Ivan Provorov into a superstar. Shayne Gostisbehere, too.

Realistic chances

Honestly, the toughest part for me is envisioning Mason as an elite goalie. The rest I'm absolutely buying. If goaltending gets resolved, the Flyers can be an outstanding franchise for seasons to come.

76ERS

My dream

No mystery here, right? Joel Embiid stays healthy and plays like, well, Joel Embiid. Just every game. Ben Simmons debuts before winter's end and decides he's not afraid to shoot.

Ownership changes its stance, embracing Nerlens Noel and trading Jahlil Okafor. Nick Stauskas continues to play above his talent level. Brett Brown learns how to close out games and not just be a babysitter.

Most optimistically, the Sixers again win the NBA Lottery (or Sacramento does, and the Sixers use their option to swap picks). The Lakers get the fourth pick, which, again, would transfer to Philadelphia.

It all culminates in a Sam Hinkie appreciation night at the Wells Fargo Center.

Realistic chances

Well, slim, certainly. A whole lot has to go right, and the track record isn't so good in that regard.

But, hey, this is my fantasy for 2017. If even half of it comes true, it's going to be a great year for our town. So happy new year, everyone. As I said, the coming year has to be better than 2015.

Right?

Joel Embiid

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Eagles draft needs (WR, CB) are strengths in 2017 NFL Draft

The Eagles have had positively dreary production from wide receivers and cornerbacks — again.

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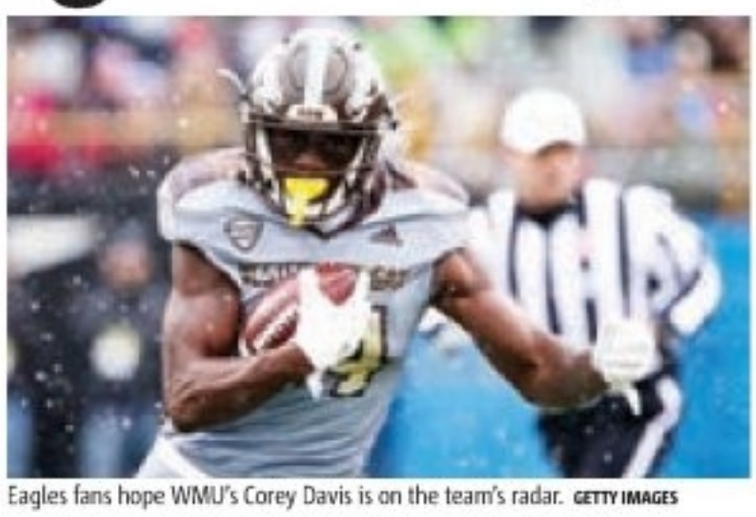

Eagles fans hope WMU's Corey Davis is on the team's radar. GETTY IMAGES

Unfortunately, you're about to hear that the Eagles' biggest needs are at wide receiver and cornerback, and not for the first time. In what has become an offseason ritual in Philadelphia, the Birds will look to bolster the league's 24th ranked passing offense and a defense that allows 7.7 yards per pass attempt, sixth worst in the NFL.

What makes matters worse: It's not for lack of trying. The Eagles have spent a first, second and third round pick at wide receiver over the last three drafts, and traded for Dorial Green-Beckham, a 2015 second-rounder. Eric Rowe was a second round pick at cornerback jettisoned after his rookie season.

Now the good news: All these positions are tremendously talented this draft. The first round pick the Eagles received for Sam Bradford will be somewhere north of 20th and likely settle around 15. If you're looking for another bright spot, if the Eagles finish the season 6-10, it will elevate their second round pick to the point where it is basically a second first rounder. Some of the players nabbed in the top five selections of the second round the past two drafts: Landon Collins, Myles Jack and Jaylon Smith.

A number of corners could go off the board in the first round, and Eagles fans might see many happy days with any of them. Even better, with so many available, it's possible the Eagles could wait for round two or even potentially double dip at the position if someone they like falls a bit. Iowa's Desmond King and Michigan's Jourdan Lewis are both under the 6-foot mark but that hasn't stopped them from locking down college football's best conference the past two seasons.

Florida could see a pair of cornerbacks go off the board in the first round: Jalen Tabor has been drawing rave reviews forever but scouts who've travelled to Florida have left with the impression his teammate Quincy Wilson may be an even better prospect.

At wide receiver, the name on Eagles fans' lips for months has been Western Michigan wide receiver Corey Davis. The 6-foot-2 wideout reached 1,400 receiving yards for the third straight season while helping the Broncos to an undefeated regular season. In his career, he has 5,212 yards and 51 touchdowns. The first number is an NCAA record and the second is good for second place all-time.

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10 Sports moments of 2016

It was actually a pretty eventful year for Philadelphia sports.

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Things are getting better in the City of Brotherly Love. After one of the worst (if not the worst) calendar years in city sports history in 2015, Philly hoisted a national championship (on the Main Line, at least) and saw encouraging signs for the future.

Here's a look at 10 moments we will take with us as we turn the page:

Villanova's NCAA Championship win was one of the city's most memorable victories ever. GETTY IMAGES

1 Villanova wins it all

Kris Jenkins will never buy himself a drink in Philadelphia again. At a time when the city needed something to rally around, the Wildcats' epic championship win over UNC with Jenkins' buzzer-beater will be remembered among the all-time great plays. They are favored to repeat in 2017.

2 All aboard the Wentz Wagon

Regardless of whether he winds up as the Eagles' next true franchise savior, the year 2016 will forever be tied to Carson Wentz. He's set a bevy of team rookie records and will only get better as the team adds weapons for him in years to come.

3 Eagles start a new era

As 2016 began, the ruins of Chip Kelly's failed Eagles experiment were haunting Philly fans. But after Howie Roseman's overhaul (making more than half a dozen high profile trades) and the hiring of Doug Pederson, the new era began in earnest.

4 Emergence of Embiid

Joel "The Process" Embiid made his NBA debut and has not disappointed, showing he is the full package — a stretch-5 with a knack for defense and post moves reminiscent of Hakeem Olajuwon. He deserves, and may just receive a 2016-17 All-Star Game nod.

5 Farewell to "Big Piece"

The Phillies had a year without many highlights finishing in last place in the NL East again, but in addition to the performance of some promising young players like Vince Velasquez and Odubel Herrera, Philly turned the page officially on the 2008 World Series team when they let go and bid farewell to Ryan Howard.

6 10 in a row for Flyers

The 2016-17 Flyers were the hottest team in hockey for a two-week stretch before Christmas, winning 10 games in a row for the first time in decades. The squad looks poised to clinch a playoff berth before the final game of the season for once.

7 Simmons No. 1; breaks foot

There was little drama for the Sixers — even after the departure of Sam Hinkie — as they selected Ben Simmons first overall in the 2016 NBA Draft. The drama came after, when the 6-foot-10 point forward broke his foot requiring offseason surgery. His debut is still pending.

8 Farewell to Snider

In a two-week stretch Flyers fans will never forget, the team mourned the loss of its owner and founder while simultaneously mounting an incredible rush to make the playoffs as the No. 8 seed before nearly upsetting the top-ranked Capitals in six games.

9 Iverson forever

Returning to the 76ers for a moment, Allen Iverson, a Philadelphia folk hero and one of the best scorers in the history of basketball, entered the Basketball Hall of Fame with an emotional speech in Springfield.

10 Hope returns

If nothing else, 2016 gave Philly fans hope. Hope that the Sixers talent could perhaps translate into wins someday. Hope that the Phillies rebuild is on the right track and will step toward the .500 mark in 2017. Hope that the Flyers are just a few years away from being Stanley Cup contenders. And hope that the Eagles — with their franchise QB adorning No. 11 — will return to NFC East contention very soon. Lets hope 2017 yields actual results.

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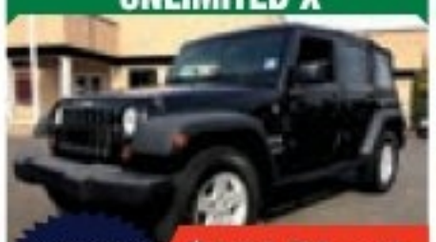
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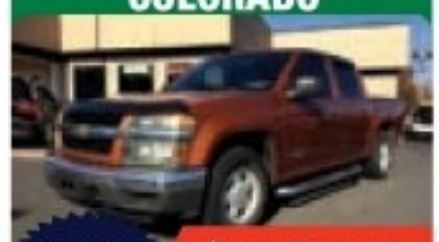
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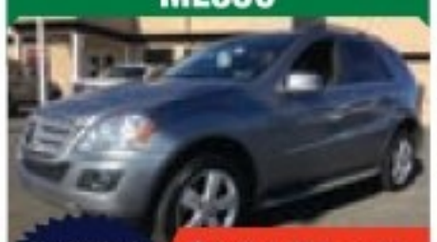
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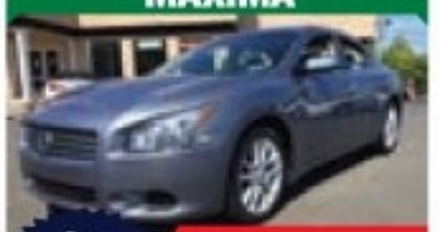
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48 It may face the rear (2 wds.)
52 Big change (2 wds.)
55 Suffix for forfeit
56 Au -- (nanny)
57 Chits
58 Leg bone
60 Noted lava spewer
61 Director -- Ephron
62 Slicker
63 It follows anything
64 Veld grazers
65 Deep Blue's game

Down
1 Earl "--" Hines
2 Old war story
3 Banded gem
4 Hull sealant
5 Marine mammal (2 wds.)
6 Attic end
7 Band together
8 Court jester
9 To no avail
10 Kind of pin
11 Desensitize
12 Chorus platform
13 Yukon transport
22 Ltd. cousin
23 Honchos
25 Rumors, perhaps
28 Whitman and Kelly
29 She, to Marie
30 -- Mahal
31 Conquistador's quest
32 Oktoberfest need
33 Dust particle
34 Annapolis grad
35 Wyo. clock setting
36 Ms. Hagen of films
38 Confusing
39 Charged particles
41 Composer -- Bartok
42 Freethinker
43 Hooded snakes
44 Ka-pow!
45 Dismantle a tent
46 Groovy
47 Razorbacks
48 Homes for hombres
49 -- Blake of jazz
50 Zodiac ram
51 Muscle injuries
53 Lake bird
54 Expert
59 Fritz, to himself

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easy

			2				8	
8		3	6		7		4	1
		4			8			
9	5	7		6		8		
				8				
		8		9		2	6	4
			8			1		
5	8		3		6	7		2
	7				1			

hard

								8
	5		2			4	7	1
				6	7	5	9	
		1		9		2		4
9								7
4		2		1		9		
	4	3	6	5				
7	2	9			8		6	
6								

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Aries A diplomatic, conservative approach to partners, peers and employers is encouraged. Self-improvement will bring better results than criticizing others.

Taurus Where is the money? It's heading your way, and as long as you put it somewhere safe, you'll be ahead of the game. Get together with friends or relatives.

Gemini Don't get caught up in someone else's melodrama. Separate the truth from fiction, and make alterations to your life that will benefit you in the new year.

Cancer If you share your thoughts and plans for the upcoming year, you will get valuable feedback that will help shape the way you move forward.

Leo An opportunity will take you by surprise. Whether you are making personal or professional changes, the future will unfold in your favor. Romance is encouraged.

Virgo Join in the fun. Whether it's a networking function or a little festive entertainment with your peers, the interactions you have will lead to a new beginning.

Libra Say less and do more. If you take action and make things happen, you'll feel happier about your future. Don't wait for change to come to you when you can go after it.

Scorpio Attending a gathering with people from your past will remind you of old dreams and skills you haven't used in a long time. Explore the possibilities.

Sagittarius A lifestyle shift must be made for the right reason. Double-check your motives and others' expectations of you before you do something. A commitment can be made.

Capricorn Accept inevitable changes and move forward without looking back. Let your intuition lead to a better future. Trust in yourself, not in what others tell you.

Aquarius Secure your place in the world. Consider what you've done and what you still want to accomplish. With a little discipline, you can put your plans in motion.

Pisces An interesting professional opportunity is within your reach. Consider the possibilities and what it would mean for your future standard of living. EUGENIA LAST

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5TH PRIZE - $500 Gift Card to Steakhouse

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